

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2758

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT AO

SUBJECT: MPLA - INCIDENTAL MILITARY INFORMATION

1. IN COURSE OF GENERAL BRIEFING OF VISITING DEPTOFF COOK (INR)
HIGH COMMAND SPOKESMAN MADE FOLLOWING POINTS ABOUT MPLA:

A. NETO'S GROUP IN BRAZZAVILLE NUMBERS AROUND 800 (NOT 600
AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED). PORTUGUESE ARRIVE AT THIS FIGURE BY
ADDING 500 WHO ACCOMPANIED NETO TO BRAZZAVILLE LAST DECEMBER
TO THOSE ALREADY IN PLACE AT DOLISIE. THESE ARE BEST ARMED/TRAINED
GUERRILLAS OPERATING AGAINST ANGOLA, AND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR
WELL-PLANNED RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST NORTHERN CABINDA. THEIR
WEAPONS INCLUDE 122MM ROCKETS, AND ACCORDING TO PORTUGUESE
INTELLIGENCE, SAM-7S ALTHOUGH NONE ACTUALLY USED TO DATE. (WE HAD
UNDERSTOOD RECENT HELICOPTER LOSS IN CABINDA WAS RESULT OF SAM-7.)

B. NETO HAS HANDFUL OF SUPPORTERS OPERATING FROM CAMPS INSIDE
ZAMBIA, AROUND THE CAZOMBO SALIENT IN EAST. SINCE APRIL 25 THEY
ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ONLY MPLA ACTION IN EASTERN SECTOR, INCLUDING
TWO SMALL AMBUSHES AGAINST MILITARY CONVOYS.

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C. BULK OF 2000 MPLA TROOPS IN ZAMBIA ARE WITH CHIPENDA, AND NOW ENGAGED IN REINFILTRATING VAST, EMPTY, UNPOPULATED ZONE (MOXICO AND NORTHERN CUANDO-CUBANGO). FEW HAVE ARMS. WHEN THEY WITHDREW FROM AREA LAST YEAR THEY LEFT ARMS IN SECRET CACHES. PORTUGUESE BELIEVE THEY HAVE RECOVERED MOST OF WEAPONS LEFT BEHIND, EXCEEDING 1,000 PIECES. (PORTUGUESE PAY BONUS TO ANYONE TURNING IN WEAPONS FOUND IN BUSH.)

2. PORTUGUESE ARE TRYING (LIKE EVERYONE ELSE) TO FIGURE OUT WHAT MPLA LEADERSHIP IS UP TO. THEY DO NOT KNOW WHEN OR WHERE RE-UNIFICATION CONGRESS IS TO BE HELD. AT PRESENT, TALKS REPORTEDLY CONTINUE BETWEEN NETO AND ANDRADE FACTIONS, IN BRAZZAVILLE.

3. IN DISCUSSION WITH COOK (NOT ATTENDED BY CONGEN) HIGH COMMAND SOURCE EXPRESSED OPTIMISM THAT MPLA WILL EVENTUALLY BE ABLE TO GET ITS HOUSE IN ORDER, AND PROVIDE UNIFYING ELEMENT ANGOLA NEEDS TO PROGRESS TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE.

4. COMMENT: WE ARE FRANKLY UNABLE GAUGE BASIS FOR ANY SUCH OPTIMISM, ALTHOUGH WE AGREE LOGIC OF SITUATION (AS WE ASSESSED IT SHORTLY AFTER COUP) WOULD SEEM TO POINT IN THAT DIRECTION. POSSIBLY PORTUGUESE ARE ALREADY IN TOUCH WITH MPLA. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL WELL-PUBLICIZED INTERVIEWS WITH NETO, LUCIO LARA, ANDRADE WHICH MAY BE PART OF PACKAGE DEAL ABOUT WHICH WE ARE OTHERWISE UNINFORMED.
BRIGGS

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